

material. It is further submitted that Heilskov '708 actually teaches away from such a stop member since a heat shrinkable stop member would not be strong enough to support the heavy metal platforms of the Heilskov '708 device. The examiner is therefore asked to withdraw this objection.

The examiner also rejected former claims 2 and 6 as being anticipated by Heilskov '628. Former claim 2 has been deleted and the subject matter of former claim 2 has been inserted into new claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that new claim 1 is not anticipated by Heilskov '628. Firstly, Heilskov '628 is directed to a landing net, not a ladder. Heilskov '628 does not teach a rigid ladder support platform since that would defeat the purpose of the net. In addition, while Heilskov '628 does mention plastic tubular elements of heat-shrinkable material, these plastic tubular elements do not act as a stop to prevent the rungs of a ladder from slipping down. Rather, the tubular elements of Heilskov '628 comprise perpendicularly crossed elements which function to maintain two pieces of rope at right angles to each other to therefore form a net. The tubular elements of Heilskov are not stop members for horizontal rigid platforms. With regard to the examiner's objection to claim 6, it is submitted that Heilskov '628 is not directed to a playground climbing apparatus. For greater clarity, claim 6 has been amended to specify that the steps are rigid platforms, not flexible portions of rope. The examiner is therefore asked to withdraw the objections to claims 2 and 6.

The examiner rejected claim 5 as being anticipated by Sandor. It is respectfully submitted that claim 5 depends from amended claim 1 and therefore includes all the limitations of claim 1. Sandor does not teach or suggest the use of heat-shrinkable material as a stop member to support the platform steps. The examiner is therefore asked to withdraw this objection.

It is further submitted that a combination of any or all of the cited references do not render the invention obvious. The only reference that mentions heat-

shrinkable materials is Heilskov '628. The heat-shrinkable elements of Heilskov are required to be perpendicularly crossed to function as described in the patent. There is no suggestion in Heilskov '628 that a single heat-shrinkable tubular element could be used as a stop member to support a rigid platform. Furthermore there is no suggestion in any of the other references that heat-shrinkable tubular sleeving could be used to hold the platforms in place. Heilskov '708 describes a flexible ladder that has steel cables with wheels. Heat shrinkable tubular sleeving would not be a sufficiently strong stop for this type of ladder. Sandor specifically teaches that his steps are fixed in position on a steel cable by steel rings 40, 42. Margolin also specifically teaches attachment of the rungs to chains using rivets and clips and so on. Since the Margolin device is based on lengths of chain, it could hardly be feasible to take the Margolin device and use heat-shrinkable tubular stop elements. It is therefore submitted that there is no motivation to combine the references to achieve the present invention.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited references neither disclose or suggest the invention as claimed and the examiner is asked to favorably reconsider the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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